



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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Contact: Denton Lankford  
(210) 321-2811

# News Release

## **8 ARRESTED FOR CONSPIRING TO DISTRIBUTE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

*Money laundering and cash smuggling also charged by grand jury*

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents, along with other agents of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), today arrested eight individuals on federal drug charges.

A federal grand jury indicted these individuals Jan. 19 on six counts, according to San Antonio ICE Special Agent-in-Charge Alonzo Pena.

Those arrested today include: Armando Nolasco, Rudolfo Briseno, Alfred Coronado, John Valdez, Martin Guerra, Hector Pina, Dustin Gaston and Tracy Gaston. Charges include possession with intent to distribute cocaine and methamphetamine, money laundering, conspiracy, and smuggling of bulk cash out of the United States.

Pena said, “This morning’s warrant execution is the culmination of a three-year drug smuggling investigation, which involved a drug cartel based in Piedras Negras, Mexico. The well-organized smuggling organization is believed responsible for importing and distributing large quantities of cocaine and methamphetamine.”

The San Antonio investigation was a joint drug smuggling investigation conducted by law enforcement agencies under the HIDTA umbrella. Participating agencies include: the U.S. Attorney’s Office Western District of Texas, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), San Antonio Police Department, the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Narcotics Division and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

“Methamphetamine is one of the most addictive drugs out there. It destroys countless lives and families. Taking down this cartel will hopefully curb the availability of this terrible drug,” stated Johnny Sutton, United States Attorney for the Western District of Texas.

## **Indictment Summary**

Count one charges that all of the defendants: did "...unlawfully, knowingly, and intentionally combine, conspire, confederate, and agree together with one another to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute a controlled substance, which offense involved in excess of 500 grams of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine, a Schedule II Controlled Substance."

Count two charges Armando Nolasco, aka "Flaco," aka "Pollaco;" Rudolfo Briseno-Andalon, aka "Polobo;" and Alfred Coronado, aka "Casper," did "...unlawfully, knowingly and intentionally aid and abet each other and one another to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance, which offense involved in excess of five kilograms of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine."

Count three of the indictment charges Armando Nolasco, and John Valdez, aka "Primo," did "...unlawfully, knowingly, and intentionally aid and abet each other and one another to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance, which offense involved in excess of 500 grams of a mixture or substance containing a detectable amount of methamphetamine."

Count four charges Armando Nolasco, and Martin Guerra, aka "Cruz," did "...unlawfully, knowingly and intentionally aid and abet others to transport, transmit, and transfer and attempt to transport, transmit, and transfer monetary instruments, that is approximately \$16,030 in lawful currency of the United States, which was the proceeds of specified unlawful activity, to wit, the illegal distribution of controlled substances."

Count five charges Armando Nolasco and Martin Guerra with intent to evade a currency reporting requirement under Title 31, United States Code, Section 5316, did "...unlawfully, knowingly and intentionally aid and abet each other to conceal more than \$10,000 in lawful currency of the United States, in a conveyance, to wit, a motor vehicle, and attempted to transport or transfer such currency within the United States to the Republic of Mexico."

Count six charges Armando Nolasco, and Hector Pina, aka "Borrega," did "...unlawfully, knowingly and intentionally aid and abet each other to transport, transmit, and transfer and attempt to transport, transmit, and transfer monetary instruments, that is approximately \$9,800 in lawful currency of the United States, which was the proceeds of specified unlawful activity, to wit, the illegal distribution of controlled substances, and which currency the defendants knew represented proceeds of some form of unlawful activity, from a place in the United States, to a place outside the United States, with the intent to promote the carrying on of specified unlawful activity, to wit, the illegal distribution of controlled substances."

The indictment also notifies all defendants of the Government's Notice of Forfeiture, which includes seizures from the defendants of numerous cars, boats, motorcycles, homes and other assets believed to have been purchased with the sale of drugs proceeds.

Indictments returned by a Federal Grand Jury charge individuals with violations of law. Those individuals must be presumed innocent, until proven otherwise by a jury after all evidence has been presented in a court of law.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*